L: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'resté à caille 'yun* — small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

may sing that it is being driven too hard, or that it is underpaid. A president may be disparaged, a neighbor who has violated a social propriety may be ridiculed, and one who has committed an indiscretion may be exposed. Such affairs are the property of the community. They are gay or grim editorials on people and institutions. There is no special ceremonial occasion, as in Surinam, when criticism may be voiced. It can happen almost anywhere, at almost any time. Songs of ridicule or complaint may be heard at the ordinary "good time" secular dance, in the Rara festivities, or even in the middle of a Vodoun religious service. If the coumbites working in the fields are not singing songs of praise, the chances are they are singing songs of criticism. Even a lone worker may sing such songs, with the expectation that they will be heard and passed on. One woman I know, who had been abused in the market place of Port-au-Prince, composed a song of recrimination which she sang loudly all along the road to Kenskoff, some twenty miles away.

Even though the songs may be quite personal, referring to situations that affect only an individual or a small group of people, once they are performed in public they are community property. They survive or fade away according to the appeal they have for others. A song which catches on may outlive its protagonists by many decades. Such a song does not lose its moral point, if it has one, or its satirical punch. It can be revived for use on appropriate occasions—usually without change, sometimes with slight modification to give it direct and timely significance.

One of the recurrent themes of protest has to do with faithlessness of friends. This song, couched in bitter metaphor, declares that the only friends to be trusted are those who are not present:

Zanmi pale mwin quitté mo zanmi loin mwin pé
Zanmi pale mwin quitté mo zanmi loin mwin!
Zanmi loin mwin c'est la'gnac doll!
Zanmi pale mwin c'est couteau diffend, quitté mo zanmi loin mwin! [Ex. 31]

Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
Friends far away from me are actual money!
Friends close to me are a two-edged knife, go far away from me, friends!

A variant of this theme goes:

Zanmi elle c'est pas zanmi pas' zanmi!
Zanmi elle c'est pas zanmi pas' zanmi wobinne!
Mains passé coillé a li li la mwin chaine mwin chine!
Li'd pa'M zanmi a mwin!

D. Courlander B-S (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 H481 SV3

533*
539*
626
592

That friend there, he is not a friend for me!
That friend there, he is not a friend for me, verily!
I pass his house, he gives me a chair to sit in!
He goes around speaking bad words about me!

Or again, you may hear:

Nig' soul, can ye no yil, ago-ti
Nig' soul, can ye no yil
Y'ap mangi ard me!
Y'ap look ard me!
Y'ap compè lavin mo dèbat! [Ex. 95]

Black man, like this you are, ago-ti
Black man, like this you are!
He will eat with you,
He will drink with you,
He will eat the life out of you!

608
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A man regards his child's godfather as his closest friend outside the family circle. Should either of the two friends fail to fulfill the high standard of behavior demanded by their tie, the other may express disappointment and recrimination, as in this song:

Compè à mein compè mo malhonnête!
Ou malhonnête compè compè à mein compè mo malhonnête!
Premier pitit mein fai'm ba mo baptê!
Malheur rivé'm nan lasemine ou pas vini wè mein!

My comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
You are dishonest comrade, my comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
I gave you my first child to baptize!
When misfortune comes to me in the laundry, you do not come to see me!

593
626
533*
539*

Sometimes even the most domestic of grievances are aired in public through means of song:

Lasemine oh!
Ba Hélène oh!
Lasemine oh!
Ba Hélène oh!
Trois pain soulèvre mari'm ba mwin!
Malediction pourri mwin! [Ex. 96]

Lasemine, oh!
Ba Hélène, oh!
Lasemine, oh!
Ba Hélène, oh!
Three pairs of shoes my husband gave me!
This misfortune has taken me!